

THE IMAGE OF WOMEN IN THE POETRY OF MAHMOUD DARWISH

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Abstract: *The majority of Mahmoud Darwish's poetry is associated with the image of women. Pointing out women's image in the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish, this paper emphasizes the analysis of the image of women in his poems. The aim of this paper is gaining a better understanding of the poet Mahmoud Darwish and his poetic works, and to demonstrate its inspiration, artistry, and rhetoric, especially regarding the subject of women's image in poem. In addition, the description method in Mahmoud Darwish's poetry is illustrated, the poetic content is clarified, and the significance and implication of the subject of women and their image in the poetry are analyzed. Finally, this paper compares and analyzes the images of women in various periods, and illuminates its influence and summarizes the main points.*

Keywords: *Women's Image, Mahmoud Darwish's Poetry, Analysis*

Introduction

This paper focuses on the analysis of women's image in the poetry of the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Salim Darwish, who is one of the best-know poets whose name is related the patriotic revolution in Palestinian and Arab countries, and is one of the poets that have made outstanding contributions to the development of modern Arabic poetry. Mahmoud Darwish is the the first poet paying attention to Palestinian issues, and he is the first woman poet as well. It is well-known that his poems concern the women, homeland and land. Mahmoud Darwish's poetry expresses the tragedy of the Palestinian people and the resistance to the occupation of the world. In his works, an effective method was adopted to express the humanity, dignity and feelings of the Palestinian people (Xue, 2016), leaving a deep imprint in the history of Arabic literature. He devised a novel way to write poetry, which is quite famous in the Arab world, and Asia requires the study of this brand-new way, which is the reason why the subject of this paper is women's image of his poetry. On the other hand, since this poet has left a great and

valuable literary heritage to the whole world, researchers and scholars are willing to devote themselves to the study of his works, and to explore his wonderful artistic experiences.

For example, the women in Mahmoud Darwish's poetry not only symbolize the motherland and hometown, but also represent the feeling of warmth and tenderness. The women in his poetry are different from those in others poets of his age. Some poets consider women as lovely, beautiful and tender females, while Darwish always appreciate women's value as the symbol of human beings. Through this paper, we are able to delve into the connotation of his work, acquire knowledge about it, understand the significance of women in his poetry, and then may enlighten the literary appreciation and study in general. For beginners who study Arabic language, Mahmoud Darwish's poems are quite useful, as the words of his poetry not only are sweet, beautiful, and easy to understand, but also have suggestiveness and profound meaning, at the same time the phrases in them possess a high level of artistry.

Problem Statement

Women occupy a large part in Mahmoud Darwish's poetic work, which is not strange in fact in ancient Arabic poetry or modern Arabic poetry. Women occupy a distinct position in the conscience of the Arab poet since the woman of Qays, Qais ibn al-Muluh and Omar Ibn Abi Rabia and her father. However, whoever following the image of the woman at Darwish and his relationship to it from his poetry could find that the poet has painted his poetic works in a special color that distinguishes him from other poets in his dealings with and focus on them. Therefore, the study is made on Mahmoud Darwish poetry characterized by novelty and originality at the same time.

The poetry of Mahmoud Darwish is still the focus of scholars and researchers for his poetic, aesthetic and literary value, but they neither specify a special study to monitor the image of women in detail nor observe the depth of the dialectical relationship between women and women. Was Mahmoud Darwish in his portrayal of women as well as his predecessors? Was he more focused on the values and human composition of women, and intellectual maturity and struggle, while neglected to portray the female that has actually passed in his life? These are the issues that this research focuses on to solve. Hence, this study demonstrates its uniqueness and importance in the field of female research. At the same time, the researcher finds that the meaning of the poet's description of the woman in Darwish's poetry varies at different stages, so the researcher wants to sail a study on comparing his old poetry and modern poetry to have a deeper understanding of the poet's idea.

Literature Review

Palestinian Mahmoud Darwish was born in al-Birwa in the western Galilee, a village that was occupied and subsequently razed by the Israeli army. Because they had missed the official Israeli census, Darwish and his family were considered as "internal refugees" or "present-absent aliens." Living for many years in exile in Beirut and Paris, Darwish is the author of over 30 books of poetry and eight books of prose, and gained the Lannan Cultural Freedom Prize from the Lannan Foundation, the Lenin Peace Prize, and the Knight of Arts and Belles Lettres Medal from France.

In the 1960s Darwish was imprisoned for reciting poetry and traveling between villages without a permit. Deemed as a "resistance poet," he was kept under house arrest when his poem Identity Card was turned into a protest song. After spending a year at a university of Moscow in 1970, Darwish worked at the newspaper Al-Ahram in Cairo. He subsequently lived

in Beirut, where he edited the journal *Palestinian Affairs* from 1973 to 1982. In 1981, he founded and edited the journal *Al-Karmel*. During 1987 and 1993, Darwish served on the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization. After 3 years, he was allowed to return from exile to visit friends and family in Israel and Palestine (Potrey foundation,2018). He possesses a number of representative works, such as *Wingless birds*, *Leaves of olives*, *A lover from Palestine*, *Birds are Dying in Galilee*, *I love you, I love you not*. His poetries were translated into more than three languages into the world. On August 9, 2008, this prominent poet passes away.

The poet Mahmoud Darwish has left a great and valuable literary legacy, which is sufficiently analysed by researchers and scholars, who also studied his poetry and explored his brilliant artistic experiences. Through a review of available studies that relate to this subject, the researcher benefits greatly from all this research to support the writing of this paper.

Dr. Mohammed Abdul Hadi published an article titled *Reflections of the symbol of women in the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish* (Mohamed Abdul Hadi, 2009), in which Mahmoud Darwish was generally introduced, such as his life and his studies at the beginning. Then he presented his personal private opinions about Mahmoud Darwish's works and the semantics of his poems, especially the manifestation mode of women's character in his poetry. In his opinion, Mahmoud Darwish occupies a unique position that is rarely enjoyed by a poet in modern and contemporary Arab culture, and his poems represent the Palestinian aesthetic dictionary of poetry. In depicting women's image and employing them in his poetic creation, Mahmoud Darwish disagreed with other poets, in whose poetry the symbol of women is new, as Dr. Mohammed Nasser stated, "This symbol is used in the traditional poems as feminine pronoun in a direct dialogue with the nation, but in the contemporary poems, this symbol has been moved away from the research, and poets are describing the homeland with all the qualities that are only able to be owned or characterized by women."

The combination of women and the country in Mahmoud Darwish's poetry extends his artistic experiences with the same emotional passion, where the poem is characterized by the love of patriotism, and mixes the image of the girl and homeland; no one can distinguish whether the passion of love is towards the girl and mother, or the earth and homeland. In addition, the poet demonstrated a strong attitude toward his sister, expressing his sympathy and respect for her, and he even was anxious that she was responsible for him. As the poet expresses his respect and love for his grandmother, Mahmoud Darwish's poetry is far beyond the literal meaning, enlightening to the readers with love that occurred between man and woman. Mahmoud Darwish has created a connection between the nation and women with various characters, especially the love and mother, which represents a significant aspect of the poet's poetic writing, he ascribed women the status in it, and lots of evidence reveals that women occupied the highest position in the poetry, making it a sacred symbol - the homeland. In other words, the poet offered "Woman" a unique and profound image in comparison to other poets (Abdul Hadi, 2009).

Researcher Ismail Al-Saafin (2015) focused on analyzing the theme of love in Mahmoud Darwish's poems and prose. In his article "Women in the Heart of Mahmoud Darwish: Aesthetics of the Texts of Love" (Ismail Al-Saafin, 2015), the researcher divides each stage into three aspects to make the analysis on the basis of its characteristics, conditions as well as features. The first stage is youth stage: aesthetics of poems "Love under occupation", the

second stage is crest stage: aesthetics of love in Exile, and the third stage is meditation: the aesthetics of poems" love to death. "

Al-Sa'afin believes that Mahmoud Darwish is one of the *affettuoso* poets in the history of modern Arabic poetry. Besides, he is the first poet of the Palestinian cause, but on the other hand, he is the first poet of the woman. As mentioned above, he divides it into three stages in this article: the first stage ranges from the beginning of Darwish's poetry in 1960 to his departure from Palestine in 1970, during which his heart burned with enthusiasm and love, at the same time, these emotions overlapped in his poems, so he wrote poetry about women and the homeland.

"I write about the love that was born in the Plastine case, and it bears its features while becoming part of it," said Mahmoud Darwish. "His love for women at this stage is not a generous love, but is influenced by the suffering of his people that come from the occupied land, so he calls on his beloved to resist oppression hand in hand. In the opinion of the researcher, the poet incorporates his complex feelings into the character shaping. Besides, the researcher finds that the poet talked about his lover in one poem, but this beloved was turned into a homeland, and then became a mother or sister in another section of it. At last, love, homeland, freedom and nature were all mixed together, with similar features, the border between them was completely eliminated. His poems showed that these images were all integrated into a whole.

In the second stage, the researcher divides it into two parts: the stage of Beirut and the Paris stage. The Beirut stage begins from the time of his joining the ranks of the Palestinian revolution to his departure from Beirut, which ranges from 1972 to 1982. The Paris phase starts from 1982 to 1994. These two stages are the most important stages of Mahmoud Darwish's literary life, in which his reputation spread as his books were published in the world. In addition, he enriched his experience in the national action in Beirut by engaging in front of the resistance trenches. In this phrase, the subject of women was slight, as the objective and subjective conditions gave top priority to the poetry of resistance. Nevertheless, women remained a symbolic extension of the earth or its complement. The nostalgia for mother, the beloved and sister overlapped with nostalgia for the occupied land in his lyrical poems, which had matured in art because of the development of his consciousness. When the poet returned to his homeland, the third stage began, the stage of return. The occupant continued to defile the streets of the city and their home. Darwish focused on the subject of love at this stage, while he did not associate this subject with his political situation, but he connected with his own psychology.

Aya al-Khawaldeh published a paper entitled "Women in Darwish's Poetry, a Symbol to Against Reality" (Al-Khawaldeh, 2014). In the opinion of researcher Aya al-Khawaldeh, Mahmoud Darwish's handling of women in his poetry is a source of tenderness and a symbol of giving. The mother and the woman are inseparable. In addition, they are human and an object that carries all the values of civilization while providing others with faith and ability to accomplish. Mahmoud Darwish mentions the woman as the land - the homeland, at the same time, he is able to embody the character of the mother, likewise, when he talks about the lover the researcher fails to see that peculiarity in his poems, which he does not mention this intimate relationship. However, for the woman, whether they are the lover or mother, or sister, all of them is a symbol of resisting reality in his poems. There is no doubt that the result shows his attitude, which comes out of the poet who clings to his mother, his beloved, fearing the future

of his sister, and he also expresses the strong nostalgia for homeland, despite he has left his hometown. The mother, the beloved and the sister, who had connected with Darwish and formed an image showing the relationship between the lover (Mahmoud Darwish) and the homeland (the mother - sister - beloved). It was only to complete something in the life of Darwish, and fill the needs of alien, in addition, the woman is the creature that reduces the weight of despair and compliant for him. As for the role of women in his poetry, he did not give it a direct combat role, as if the struggle was limited to men only, although he gave sanctity to the woman, in particular, he made it promoted to become the homeland with warmth, dignity, love and great love.

The researcher also quotes other scholars to support her view, such as writer Aya Asmaran: "The woman in the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish represents a symbol of the homeland and belonging and all that is related to the home of feeling warm and tenderness." The woman was shaped differently in Nizar Qabbani's poetry, that is, the woman as a female loves him, while Darwish shapes the women as a symbol, a human being and emphasizes the value of women's existence because of the circumstances he experienced in the occupied country, so women are sacred to him. In addition, it has also become a glorious image of the Palestine struggle.

Taking poetic texts as example, the researchers and scholars analyzed its significance and writing style in this article. Here the researcher refers to the existence of some common factors between this paper and articles from other scholars in the analytical method and the views on women, for example, this can be used by the researcher, especially by reviewing his analytical method, and at the same time the researcher will adopt the personal method in text analysis, to further deepen the study. On this basis, the researcher will provide more details in describing the image of women and expand it simultaneously.

Research Methodology

Research methodology is the procedures and methods that help the researcher renew the subject and collect and analyze the data and information, as well as the way of expressing thought and solve problems. It is the skill of organizing the right series of ideas, to write the research from beginning to end. The researcher will rely on the descriptive method and analytical method.

Descriptive method

Here the researcher will employ descriptive method to explain the woman in Mahmoud Darwish's poem, and study his poetic works that are related to this subject, to obtain an understanding of his biography and creative background, and to explain the presence of poetry that includes the women's image in it.

Analytical method

In this research, the researcher will adopt analytical method to analyze the image of women in Mahmoud Darwish's poetry from two aspects, artistry and rhetoric, to understanding the importance of women's symbol in his poetry, and any rhetorical methods emerging in the writing of poetry that highlights the image of women.

Template analysis

An example of Rita and rifle:
Between Rita and my eyes...

There is a rifle

This sentence is a noun sentence which consists of the prepositional phrase at the beginning and the backward predicate, and is separated with points leaving space for imagination. Rita was an Israeli girl he loved and was not possible to love due to the conflict, which is represented in the rifle. They had a love affair that ended with their separation due to their being in opposite sides of the Palestinian cause. The "rifle" between Rita and poet symbolizes the war, and the poet used a number of words to describe how beautiful Rita is and the fond memories between them.

And whoever knows Rita
Kneels and plays
To the divinity in those honey-colored eyes
And I kissed Rita
When she was young
And I remember how she approached
And how my arm covered the loveliest of braids
And I remember Rita
The way a sparrow remembers its stream
Ah, Rita
Between us there are a million sparrows and images
And many a rendezvous

"Rita" became a female symbol frequently appearing in Darwish's poems. In his narrative poem, "Rita" is the heroine of the love tragedy, and the lover whom he confided with.

The image of women in the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish

As mentioned above, a majority of Mahmoud Darwish's works are related to women, such as the "mother" in A letter from exile and to mother, the "lover" in Rita and rifle and First date and on the like. Starting from his early works, this paper analyzes them one by one in chronological order of his published works.

A letter from exile

Selected from Mahmoud Darwish's collection of poems *Leaves of olive*, published in 1964, this poem is a message from the Palestinian homeless to every human being with a keen feeling to tell the experience of suffering. The poet describes his difficult state of alienation, he lacks consolation, and no one feels with him the suffering and nostalgia for the homeland. His obsession with despair and loss of hope, and the sense of alienation, make him look like a lost and weak bird. Both are constrained by freedom, lost and tired away from their homeland. These pictures stimulated some memories that he wrote in the same poem. He, who left them in his homeland and inquires about their situation, recalled his mother, his father, his brothers and his companions. He does not know what has happened to them, even if they are alive or dead or they are exiled like him without address and value. (Jamal Sawy, 2009).

The image of women in this poem touches on his mother, sister and grandmother. Literally, the poet is talking here with his mother, in fact, he is talking to his homeland as well. The poet has been displaced abroad for many years, despite the bitter life, and every night in hunger, he still said "I'm fine."

I'm fine
I've turned twenty

I've become a man, Mother

...

The Palestinian homeless here talk with "mother" that is the symbol of compassion and concern and love, the poet compares the image of motherly love with the cruel reality in order to highlight the latter, cruel reality:

Mother! Night is a hungry wolf
Chasing the exile wherever he goes

...

What have we done, Mother

The woman here is not only his family, but a symbol of his homeland, he told his "mother" that the night seemed a hungry wolf, both of them were cruel, they drove aliens ignoring their pains. The poet feels alone and frightened. Therefore, he inquires from his homeland or his mother about the reason for his exile.

In this poem, the image of women is integrated with the homeland, and the poet also expressed the same passion for his homeland and his mother. Longing for his country and yearning for his mother, he has questions to ask them because he is incapable of returning to his homeland, and also, he worries about them. The poet has an affection towards his mother and his homeland. The image of women in this poem has a double-meaning.

The most beautiful love

This poem is from the poetry collection "Leaves of olives", in which the poet describes the hardship of the revolution, and requires help from his female friends. In fact, Mahmoud Darwish disagrees with others in describing women. He cares nothing about the description of women and their relationships so well, so that women are targets in his writings, he seeks an approach that female friends are needed to join him to achieve this goal:

We are friends, therefore journey beside me, hand in hand

Together, we make bread and songs

The poet's relationship with the woman under revolution has taken on different forms. The women played an active role in participating in and organizing the revolution in most instances. If the woman does not accompany him encouraging and inciting the revolution, the poet will not be kept move forward.

We are friends, therefore journey beside me, hand in hand

Together, we make bread and songs

Why do we question this path- for what fatewalks with us?

What is the source of our courage?

For it is my sufficiency, and yours, that we journey

Together, for eternity

The woman's image in this poem is a friend and comrade, in the eyes of the poet, the woman plays a significant and critical role in the revolution and every aspect of daily life, who also wishes to participate in the revolution, and helps him to accomplish the goal together. In this poem, the image of the woman is a positive image that actively participates in the revolution.

To my mother

Mahmoud Darwish wrote this poem behind the bars of his Israeli prison in 1965 and appeared in the collection of poems lover of Palestine, published in 1966, and became one of the most famous modern Arabic poems. At the beginning, the poet used present verb to express his nostalgia. And this nostalgia for mother, her bread and coffee, which is unlike any other taste,

unlike bread at the moment, it lost the smell of home and fire. Mother mixed with her sweat in grinding and manufacturing coffee and bread to get the special flavor what he searches for everywhere and brings back the childhood memory. Bread here is the strength and foundation of life, and coffee is a symbol of the gift of peace and stability that he lived and felt with his mother.

I long for my mother's bread
My mother's coffee
Her touch
Childhood memories grow up in me
Day after day
I must be worth my life
At the hour of my death
Worth the tears of my mother.
And if I come back one day
Take me as a veil to your eyelashes
Cover my bones with the grass
Blessed by your footsteps
Bind us together
With a lock of your hair
With a thread that trails from the back of your dress
...
So that I
Along with the swallows
Can share the path
Back to your waiting nest

The poet expresses his love for life, because he wants to stay and live for his mother so that she does not cry in vain. Afterward, Darwish used imperative verb to express his wish, and assumed that the act here is gained response to the condition, where he wishes to return and to fall into the arms of the motherland. The poet prepared to sacrifice in order to be in her arms (homeland), he wants to be covered by the grass of the earth, which was erased from the sweat and blood. There is a sentence in Hadith: "Paradise is under the feet of mothers." And this indicates the holiness of the earth and the greatness of the mother. After this, Mahmoud Darwish turns to the other request from his mother (Bind us together ... your dress). This part of the text reflects that the poet adopts the symbolic description technique. He expresses his strong attachment to the mother (the land of Palestine) by asking her to tighten him.

The main idea in this poem is nostalgia for the land of Palestine, with the hope of returning to it. The image of the "mother" here is not only the real mother, but also symbolizes the homeland. Because of the verse (so that I ... waiting nest), which knows the mother symbolizes homeland Palestine. He wishes that he can come with the young people on the way back and return to their mother's place (the land of Palestine) in his ageing. In this poem the image of the mother is warm and holy, so the poet uses it to symbolize the homeland to express the feelings of compassion and the most noble love for the land of Palestine.

Conclusion

The women occupy a large part of Mahmoud Darwish's poetry. In fact, this is a quite common phenomenon whether in ancient Arabic or in modern poetry. Women have occupied a unique

position in the Arabic poems since the Qais Ibn Al-Muluh and Omar Ibn Abi Rabia and others. By analyzing the image of the woman in Darwish and its relationship to it from his poetry, the researcher finds that the poet has painted his poems in a special color that distinguishes him from other poets in depicting and focusing on women. Some of the research results are as follows:

In Mahmoud Darwish's poetry, women were represented something sacred, for whose image is a symbol of the homeland, in his opinion, the motherland is not only his birthplace, but also his cherished lover, partners and family. His love for the motherland is his noble sentiment. Hence, the poetry possesses a distinctive feature, that is, to combine the characteristics of the homeland and mother.

In Mahmoud Darwish's view, women played an important role in social life, and also had a huge impact on solving the issues, which are overlooked by most poets. The poet adopts a method of metaphor and symbolic style of rhetoric to describe women, offering them multiple meanings.

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